(d) if so, what are the details thereof and to what extent the public will be benefited by this facility?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. These public telephones will permit STD/ISD calls by use of one rupee coins or tokens or use of cards. Some of them may permit local calls also.

These telephones will be provided all over the country, including cities of Punjab, progressively as these telephones become available.

The general public would be able to make STD/ISD calls from these telephones by dialling the calls themselves.

Overmanning in public sector

*354. SHRI DEBA PRASAD RAY: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the public sector suffers from 25 per cent to 35 per cent over-manning; if not, what is Government's assessment in this regard;

(b) whether any international agency has given any report regarding overmanning in India's public sector; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to eliminate the same in a phased manner?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO): (a) The overall percentage of overmanning has not been assessed. But as per information available, 31 public sector enterprises have reported that 50,287 employees are surplus to their requirements, 86 public sector enterprises have no surplus and the remaining 92 public sector enterprises have not yet identified surplus staff.

(b) Government is not aware of any such report.

(c) Government have formulated a Voluntary Retirement Scheme for implementation by the public sector enterprises. On implementation of this scheme surplus manpower can be gradually reduced.

Recruitment in ONGC

*355. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the newsitem in Financial Express of 30th January, 1989 regarding an understanding between ONGC and Gujarat Government concerning recruitment in ONGC; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and whether such understanding would be sought with the other State Governments also where ONGC is operating?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Recruitment in ONGC is done according to the procedure laid down in the ONGC (Recruitment & Promotion) Regulations, 1980. Such procedure provides for appointments from, among others, candidates sponsored by local employment exchanges and apprentices trained in the concerned Regions. The question of ONGC reaching a separate understanding with any State Government on recruitments in ONGC would not thus arise.

Tie-up sales of gas stoves by LPG agencies in Andhra Pradesh

*356. SHRI PRABHAKAR RAO KALVALA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints from public and Consumer Education and Research Centre regarding tie-up sales of gas stoves by LPG agencies in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the action taken by Government against LPG agencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) and (b) While no specific complaint has been received in this regard from public and Consumer Education and Research Centre, complaints received against LPG distributors about their pressurising new allottees of LPG connections to purchase gas stoves from them are investigated and customers' grievances redressed. All distributors are required to prominently display a notice in their showrooms that it is not obligatory for a consumer to purchase stoves from the distributor releasing the connection. Action against the erring distributors is taken in line with the Marketing Discipline Guidelines.

Losses on account of power supply to the rural sector

*357. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:
SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) the annual losses to the State Electricity Boards on account of supply of power to the rural sector during each of the years of the current Five Year Plan and the estimated losses for 1988-89;

(b) gross total loss till date incurred by all the State Electricity Boards; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to eliminate this huge drain on the public exchequer and with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) The annual estimated losses to the State Electricity Boards on account of supply of power to the agricultural sector and the Rural Electrification (RE) subsidies during each of the years of the current Five Year Plan are indicated below:—

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Losses	RE subsidies
1985-86 . .	1330	1009
1986-87 . . .	1806	774
1987-88 . . .	2569	1272
1988-89 . . .	2904	1317

(b) By 31-3-1989 the cumulative losses are expected to be Rs. 2452.1 crores after reckoning RE subsidies as provided in the accounts.

(c) Some of the measures taken to improve the performance of State Electricity Boards (SEBs) are:—

(i) Section 59 of the Electricity (Supply) Act has been amended to provide for every State Electricity Board to carry on its operation and adjust its tariff in such a way as to earn a net surplus of not less than 3 per cent.

(ii) Directions have been issued to State Electricity Boards for capitalisation of interest during construction (IDC), as provided in the Eletricity (Supply) Annual Accounts Rules, 1985.

(iii) State Governments have been requested to provide equity support to State Electricity Boards to make them financially viable.

(iv) State Governments are being advised to release rural electrification subsidies to SEBs regularly and adequately.

(v) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Renovation & Modernisation of thermal power stations has been introduced.

(vi) Theft of power has been made a cognizable offence with stringent punishment for the commitment as well as abetment of the offence.